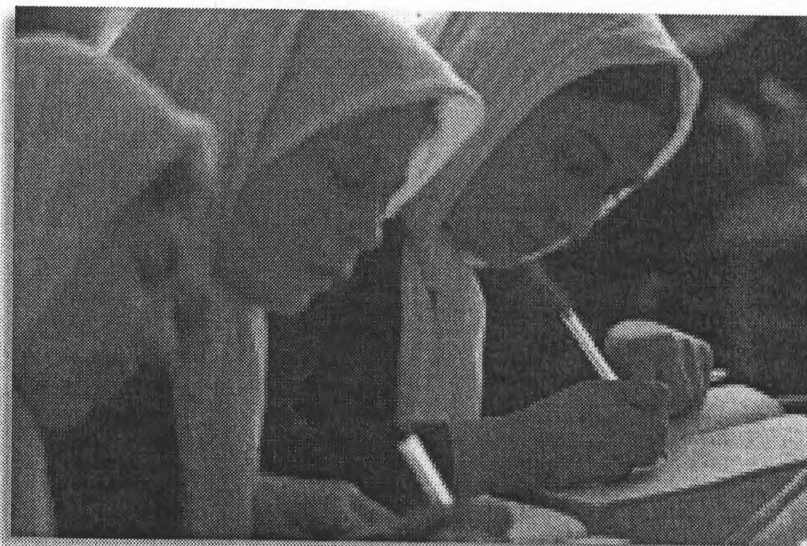
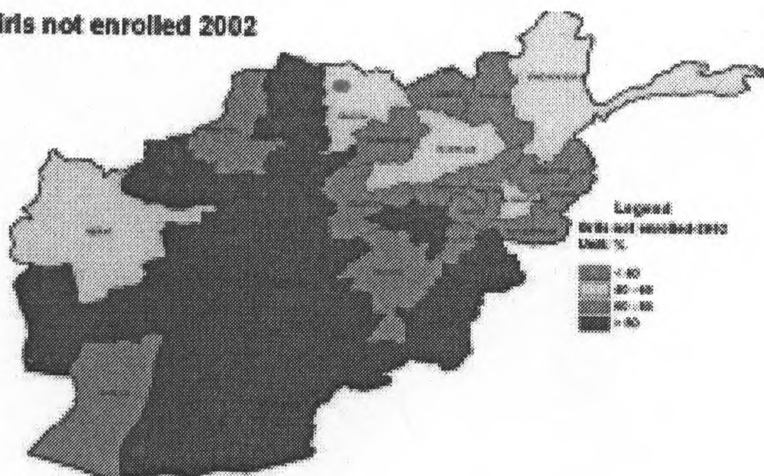
AFGHANISTAN EDUCATION FACT SHEET
FEBRUARY 2005

Education at a glance



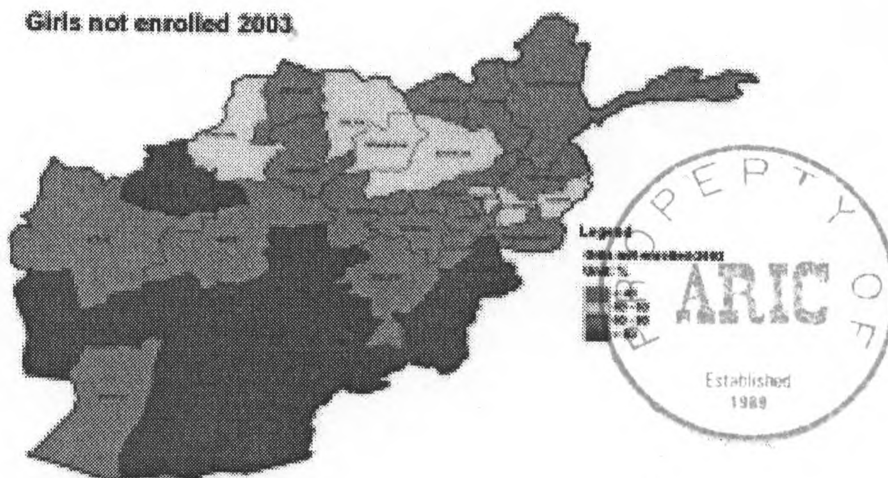
Student numbers – the thirst for education continues

- Between 2002 and 2004, 4.2 million children returned to Afghanistan's schools.
- There has been a four-fold increase in student numbers since the fall of the Taliban. There are now more children in school than ever before in Afghanistan's history.
- Girls' enrolment has leaped from an estimated gross enrolment rate of 3% prior to 2002 to 30% of all enrolled students in 2003. Girls' enrolment in the crucial primary years is a little higher, at 35% of all enrolled students.
- However, more than 1 million girls aged between 7 and 13 years are still not in school.
- In nine provinces, girls' non-enrolment stands at more than 80 per cent, and at 99 per cent in two provinces (see maps below)



Schools – decades of conflict leave scars on facilities

- In 2003 there were 7,029 schools, including 4,783 formal schools recognized by the Ministry of Education.
- Approximately 75 per cent of schools were damaged during the three decades of conflict in Afghanistan.
- Only 48 per cent of schools have adequate water and sanitation facilities
- Since 2002, 1,753 schools have been rehabilitated or constructed, yet it is estimated that 5,574 schools still need to be built over the next three years.
- Student teacher ratios are in the region of 40:1 at primary, and 30:1 at secondary level, but over half of classes lack teacher preparation.



Teachers – numbers increase, but quality remains key concern.

- Teacher numbers remain low compared to growing enrolment and increasing class sizes.
- Despite an increase in teacher numbers (now reported at around 100,000), there is still a clear shortage of women teachers.
- Teacher qualifications are limited – less than 15 per cent of teachers hold professional teacher training credentials.
- Technical and logistical capacity within the Ministry of Education is limited at all levels.

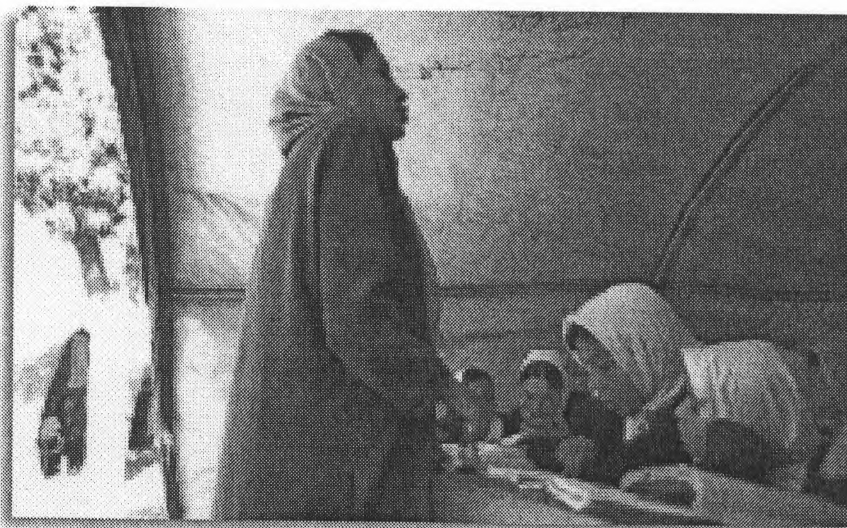
Barriers to education

- Reasons for children not attending school include distance from home to school rooms, lack of separate facilities for girls and boys, shortage of female teachers and family attitudes towards value of education.

UNICEF support to education

Since 2002, UNICEF has been supporting the Government of Afghanistan's efforts to increase access to educational facilities and temporary learning spaces, promote awareness on the importance of education for all, while assisting the Government to establish a quality primary education system.

In 2003-2004 UNICEF supported the rapid resumption and continuation of learning opportunities for 4 million Afghan children, with a special emphasis on girls' education, and to support the long-term reconstruction and transformation of the education system. UNICEF also leads the Consultative Group for Education and co-ordinates policy discussion, national planning and coordination of resource allocation among sector-wide partners.

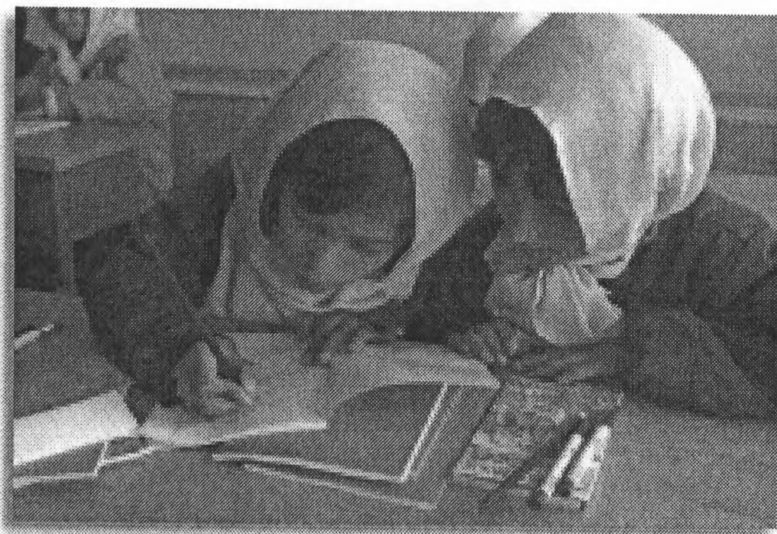


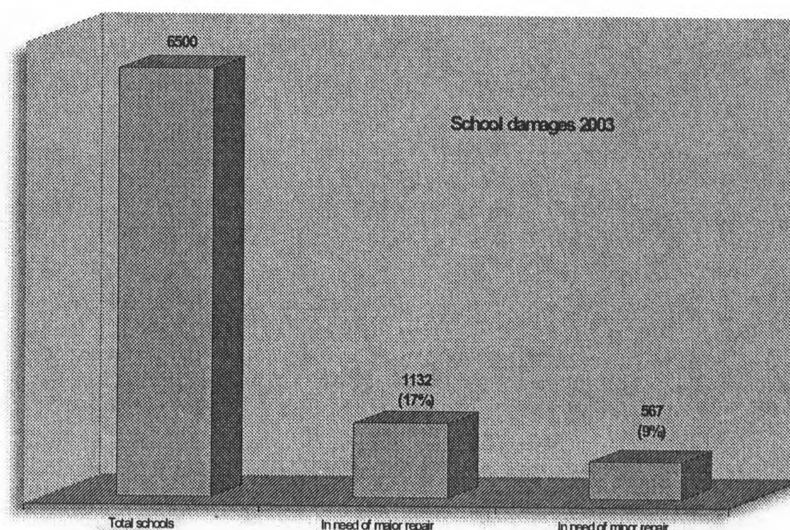
	Girls	Boys
2002	28%	53%
2003	37%	66%
Increase	5%	13%

Primary school enrolment as % of primary school-age population

Progress to date

- UNICEF has provided teaching and learning materials to all students and teachers since 2001 as a part of the bi-annual Back to School campaign. In 2004, essential supplies and learning materials were provided to 4.4 million students and 81,000 teachers.
- Special attention has been given to fulfilling the right to education of internally displaced, returnee and other hard-to-reach children. Stationery and consultation services were provided to returnee families at five encashment centres upon entering Afghanistan. Educational supplies and other support were provided to 248,00 IDPs and returnee children in 2003- 04.
- An Accelerated Learning Programme for out-of-school girls has helped nearly 87,000 girls receive basic education and catch up on missed years of education.
- Community-based schools have been established for 75,000 girls to date in areas with no formal schools, in an effort to address the distance barrier to education. These schools use existing community resources such as mosques or private homes, and locally selected literate women to run basic classes.
- Short in-service teacher training was conducted in 2003-04 for all 53,029 primary teachers on language arts, pedagogy and landmine awareness. A task force of Afghan educators also developed a set of standards for teachers in primary schools; the standards are intended to be the basis for developing a full two-year curriculum for Teacher Training Institutes.
- UNICEF also is working with the Government and other partners to formulate the Teacher Education Project, which is designed to develop a coordinated long-term plan for teacher education, including pre-service training.





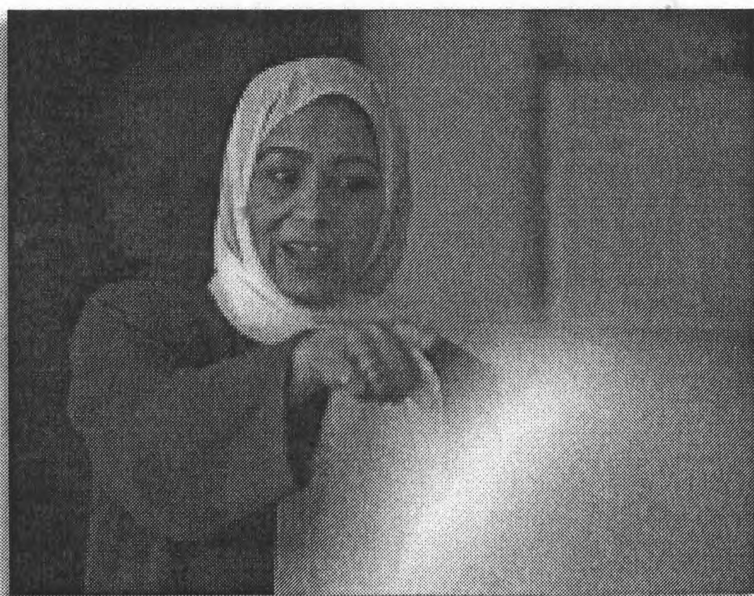
* Radio programmes on teacher training are broadcast daily by the BBC with UNICEF support.
* UNICEF has facilitated and supported a partnership between the Ministry of Education and Teachers College Columbia University to develop new textbooks and teacher orientation for Grades 1 and 4. New syllabi and textbooks for all subjects in Grades 2 and 3, and for Grade 5 language studies, have been completed and should be ready to use in classes by 2006.
* An Education Management Information System (EMIS) has been developed and more than 500 Ministry of Education staff trained in its use. Comprehensive baseline data have been collected for all schools in Afghanistan covering student and teacher profiles, school facilities and school rehabilitation.
* Together with DANIDA and the World Bank, UNICEF has supported the establishment of a Grants Management Unit (GMU) within the Ministry of Education which brings together donors and other interested parties to develop educational strategy.
* A national communication and advocacy campaign has been developed, to provide parents, families, communities, and children themselves, with information on the importance of education, schools and the support available for the education of girls.



UNICEF focus in 2005

UNICEF, with other development partners, will support the Ministry of Education to increase the overall enrolment of children in schools, with special emphasis on girls, and the improvement of quality of education. Specifically, UNICEF and its partners will aim to enrol an additional 400,000 girls in schools; and to revise curriculum, continue development of textbooks, and train 25,000 teachers on child-centred gender-sensitive new curriculum. In order to achieve these objectives, UNICEF has planned the following major activities for 2005:

* Provision of basic educational supplies for 4.5 million students and 105,000 teachers
* Establish community-based schools for 400,000 out-of-school girls
* Support a female literacy programme through printing of textbooks and training module and training of trainers and teachers
* Development of syllabi and textbooks for some subjects of Grade 3 and 5 and all subjects of Grade 6 and syllabi and textbooks for a two years teacher education programme
* In-service training on a new gender-balanced curriculum for 25,000 primary school teachers
* Support implementation of a multi-donor teacher education project to develop long-term teacher development
* Training and capacity building support to provincial and district education officials, principals and head teachers
* Implementation of a national media and mobilization campaign for girls' education



UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office
PO Box 54
UNOCA Compound
Jalalabad Road
Kabul, Afghanistan

Public Information : +93 (0)796 07400
email: kabul@unicef.org

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